



HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.

Alonzo L. Plough, Ph.D., MPH, Director and Health Officer

To: Station 31 Medical Testing Advisory Panel
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Joel Kaufman, MD, MPH, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences,
University of Washington
Matthew Keifer, MD, MPH, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences,
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Rayburn Lewis, MD, Swedish Medical Center

Edsonya Charles, Office of the Mayor, City of Seattle
John Gablehouse, Seattle Fire Department
Dennis Karl, Local 27 Firefighters' Union
Greg Kipp, Public Health – Seattle and King County
Dan Nelson, Local 27 Firefighters' Union

From: Maggie McDonald, Project Manager for the Station 31 Expert Panels

Date: July 22, 2004

Re: **REVISED - Results of Station 31 Blood Lead Level Testing**

This memo replaces the memo dated July 15, 2004 with updated information.

The purpose of this memo is to inform you of the results of the blood lead level testing performed at the Public Health – Seattle and King County North Public Health Center of those individuals who authorized release of their result.

In early February 2004, 1,622 current or former members of Seattle Fire Department Station 31, or their families, were informed by mail of the results of the Prezant Associates industrial hygiene analysis along with an interpretation of these results by the Medical Testing Advisory Panel. As you'll recall, a few specific areas of the Station 31 building were found to contain lead above Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) levels; however, no airborne lead was detected. The panel concluded that the surface lead exposure risk was small, but recommended that a blood lead level test be offered as an option to firefighters to allay any potential concerns.

The tests were all performed at the North Public Health Center in Seattle from February 3 through June 30, 2004 at no cost to firefighters. We have no information about tests that may have been done elsewhere for firefighters who live out of the area; however, no claims were submitted to the Seattle Fire Pension Board (which would reimburse for the test for retirees).

As stated above, 1,622 individuals were identified as having worked at Station 31 in the 1975-2003 timeframe, 1,576 of whom are still living. One hundred fifteen (115) people or 7% had their blood tested for lead. In accordance with state and federal confidentiality laws, Public Health asked permission of those individuals to release their test result in aggregate form. Those willing to release their result signed an authorization form for use and disclosure of protected health information. Forty (40) people or 35% of the tested population authorized release.

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The 40 results ranged from 0-5 micrograms of lead/deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g/dl}$). According to the criteria set forth by Drs. Kaufman and Keifer, anything below 15 $\mu\text{g/dl}$ is in a range that indicates a small amount of past or current exposure, but not at a level associated with health effects in adults, and not clearly indicative of recent exposure. According to the WA State Department of Labor and Industries Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention program (SHARP) Occupational Lead Exposure: An Alert for Workers (October, 1999), 3 $\mu\text{g/dl}$ is the average level for healthy adults. The Alert also states that at a level of 40 $\mu\text{g/dl}$, lead may have effects without symptoms.

This information is summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Station 31 – Optional Blood Lead Level Testing, North Public Health Center, Seattle WA

	Number	Percent	Result
Station 31 - Potential Pool of Individuals	1576		
Station 31 - Tested Individuals	115	7%	
Station 31 – Tested Individuals who authorized result release	40	35% of tested individuals	
Station 31 - Authorized Blood Lead Level Test Result			Range from 0-5 $\mu\text{g/dl}$
WA Dept of Labor & Industries SHARP - Average Blood Lead Level Test Result for Healthy Adults			3 $\mu\text{g/dl}$